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THE RIGHT
Way to Safety
AFTER
SHIP-WRACK:
IN A
S E R M O N

Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, in *St. Patrick's Church, Dublin.*

Jun. 16. 1661.

At their Solemn Receiving of the Blessed
S A C R A M E N T.

By the most Reverend Father in God, *JOHN*
Lord Archbishop of *Armagh*, Primate
and Metropolitan of all *Ireland.*



D U B L I N,
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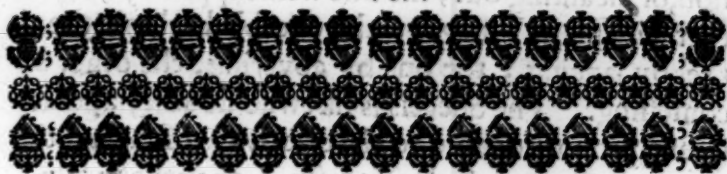
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IN A
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JAN. 18. 1861.
SACRAMENTO.
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JAMES W. HARRIS, JR.
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1. The first of these is the fact that the
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PROV. 28. 13.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.

IN these Words, two different Ways, which Sinners take to attain to Happiness, are represented to us; The one short and broad, but impassable, by reason of Thieves and Precipices; *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper*: the other long and strait, but certain and secure, *Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.* Or if you will, a common Shipwrack, wherein two Planks are presented to us, to save us from drowning; The one painted, but rotten, which will undoubtedly deceive us, that is, the Plank of Dissimulation: *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper*: The other rugged, but sound, which will infallibly bring us safe to Land, that is, the Plank of Repentance; *He that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercie.*

Or lastly, We may consider herein the Sore, the Chyrurgery, and the Success: The Sore is Sin, the Course of Chyrurgery is double and different, the one by healing over, or binding up, the other by inci-
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sion,

fion, or cleansing out; the one with supple Oyl, the other with sharp Vineger; the one by bathing, the other by lancing; the one by covering, the other by confessing. The Success is likewise double, and different, proportionable to the two ways of cure; the one unprosperous, *shall not prosper*; the other prosperous, *shall have mercy*. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercie.*

The Sore is spiritual and epidemical, that's Sin, 2. Chron. 6. *When every one shall know his own sore.* And more emphatically Isa. 1. 6. it is styled a *putrifying sore*. So long as our first Parents continued in the state of Innocencie, Roses grew without Thorns, as St. Ambrose observed. As there was no Sin, so there was no Sicknes; no Sores in the World, either of Soul or Body. Indeed it was not impossible for them to sin, so they should have been Gods, not Men; but it was possible for them not to have sinned, which is as much as the Angels in Heaven can challenge to themselves: for many of them fell irrecoverably, because they found not a Redeemer, and those, which stood, owe their Conservation, as we do our Redemption, to the Crofs of Christ, Col. 1. 20. But by the fall of Adam the Image of God became defaced in Man, the Rays of heavenly Light eclipsed, the Sparkles of divine Grace cooled, the Understanding insatuated, the Will confounded, the Affections disordered, and in place of these Perfections, Sin entered into the world as an Hereditary Contagion, a spiritual Leprosie, with
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the Consequents of it, all manner of Sores and Diseases, both of Soul and Body, which cannot be cur'd with all the Balm in *Gilead*, nor cleans'd with all the Water in the Ocean; but onely by the Blood of Christ, and in order to that, by Repentance; which is the Cure commended in my Text.

Hence all those swarms of Fevers, Catarrhs, Gouts, Palsies, Apoplexies, and the like, which do infest the Body of Man more than any other living Creatures: We may be burned up with Cholerick Distempers, drowned with Hydropick Humours, choak'd with the Fumes of a vitious Stomack, and buried quick in the Grave of Melancholick Imaginations. But the chiefest Defects are those of the Soul, as 1. Ignorance, that in so thick a mist of Errours and Sects, we know not how to finde out the Truth; and that, which tops up our Folly, is, That we are grown too wise in our own conceits. 2. Concupiscence, that Pestilence of the Soul, whose cankered Blossoms are still sprouting up in the most Regenerate Hearts; this weakened the Power of *Sampson*, infatuated the Wisdom of *Solomon*, defiled the Holiness of *David*. 3. Self-love, an hidden Poyson, the Rust of the Minde, the Moth of Holiness, the Parent of Envie, the Original of all Vices. 4. Discontent, which makes us prize what we want, sleight what we enjoy, more sensible of Sufferings than of Blessings; like little Children, which for want of some Toy which they affect, throw away all they have, and fall a crying: we follow Contentment hard, but as Fools do an *Ignis Fatuus*,

always at a distance. 5. Preposterous fear; If we do ill, we fear Magistrates; if we do well, we fear Detractors: if we be rich, we fear Thieves; if poor, Creditors; if we hate, we fear Enemies; if we love, Corrivalls. 6. Distrust; We all say, We trust God, but for the most part sooner with our Souls, than with our Estates, and hardly without a Pawn, as Usurers would trust a Bankrupt. Lastly Hypocrisie: If there be a Mote in the Eye, there is a Beam in the Heart; if there be a Beam in the Eye, there is a Stack of Mischief in the Heart: We look one way, and row another way; blow hot and cold with the same Mouth, and have our Hearts more double than our breath: We flatter for advantage, and we slander for advantage; we serve God for advantage, and if need be, we serve the Devil for advantage. Then since we have all made shipwrack of Baptismal Grace by sin, since all without exception do stand in need of a second Plank to save them from drowning, it remains that we make choice of one of the two presented to us in my Text, Dissimulation, or Conversion; Covering, or Confessing: That's the next part: *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

There are three good covers of sin in holy Scripture, 1. Charity, 2. Conversion, 3. Pardon: The two first are mens covers, the third is Gods-cover.

1. Charity, *Prov. 10. 12. Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all sins*, and *1. Pet. 4. 8. Charity shall cover the multitude of sins*; Charity thinketh no evil, Charity suspecteth no hurt, Charity interprets all things

things in the best sense; Charity doth not aggravate or exaggerate the faults of men, but seeks to extenuate them, imputing them to a good Intention, or to Ignorance, or to Surprize, or to the violence of Temptation: Charity delights not in carrying about far-dles of Tales and Calumnies, as Pedlars do their Packs, from House to House, nor to divulge the Faults of Men, as cursed *Cham* did the Nakedness of his Father; but to conceal them, and to suppress them, as *Joseph* was not willing to make *Mary* a publique example: Charity is not vindictive, to write Injuries in Marble, but buries them in oblivion. He that wants this cover, is an unclean Vessel; He that hath not this wedding Garment, is sure to be cast into outer darkness; but he that hath it is blessed; he shall prosper: *Judge not, and you shall not be judged.*

The second good Cover is Conversion, *Jam. 5. 20.* *He that converteth a sinner, shall save a soul, and hide a multitude of sins.* Just as he converts a Sinner, and saves a Soul, so he hides sins; not primitively, but derivatively; not principally, but subordinately; not sovereignly, but ministerially. He converts morally, but Grace; Physically; he by perswading, but Grace by renewing. Now Conversion being an infallible way to Remission, he that helps to convert, helps to cover sin; that's one way. 2. He that converts a man helps to amend him, and after amendment the shame of former sins is covered; the memory of them is rather a Badge of Honour, than a note of Ignominy; like the scar of a Souldiers wound, after it is healed.

Thus he hides the sins of his Convert. But he hides his own sin likewise, that is, dispositively he renders himself more capable of Gods pardon. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall finde mercy :* But those busie Bodies, whose Affections are stronger than their Judgements, who labour with tooth and nail to spread abroad their erroneous Dreams, must expect no share in this Blessing : *VVo be to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites : for you compass sea and and land to make a Profelyte, and make him two-fold more a child of Hell, than your selves.*

The third kinde of covering of sin is the forgiving of it. *Psal. 85. 2. Thou hast forgiven their iniquity, and covered all their sins :* that is, covered them from the eye of thy Justice ; as a Wound is covered with a Plaister, to cure it ; as a dead Body is covered in the Grave, to avoid the stench of it ; as the Doors of the Israelites were covered with the Blood of the Paschal Lamb, to cause the destroying Angel to pass by them. In the same regard elsewhere the Remission of sins is called a *forgetting of them*, a *casting of them behinde the back*, a *burying them in the bottom of the sea* : of all Covers, this is the best, *Psal. 32. 1. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.*

But these are not the Covers intended in my Text, the first of which is down-right Denial, as Gebezi thought to have out-faced his Master, and Ananias and Sapphira, St. Peter. *Prov. 30. The harlot eateth and wipeh her mouth, and saith, What have I done ?* Men
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are too apt to forget the all-seeing Eye of GOD; like Woodcocks, which thrust their Heads in a Bush, and think no man sees them, because they see no man. Let the leprosie of *Gebezi*, let the sudden death of *Ananias* & *Sapphira* warn us to take heed how we seek to cover our faults with lyes; well may it advantage a man a little for the present, as a lye got *St. Peter* his admission into the high Priests hall, but it hath ever a foul ending, and within a while forfeits the whole stock of a mans credit and reputation: Therefore the Scripture saith, *That a lying Tongue is but for a moment; and to God it is a very abomination*, Prov. 12. 22. Then tell the Truth, and shame the Devil: When a Fault is ingeniously discovered, the Amends is half made.

The second Cover is mincing or extenuating of our sins, as the Sluggard, *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber;* and *Jonathan* did but taste a little Honey upon his Rods end: But *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, a few dead flies cause the ointment of the Apothecarie to stink*, Eccl. 11. He that clippeth a little of the Kings Coyn, is guilty of Treason; every little Sand hath his weight; and it is all one whether a man be pressed to death with an heap of Sand, or a Mass of Lead, whether a Ship be overwhelmed with one great wave, or drowned with many small Leaks. More perish by the daily habitual presumptuous practice of lesser sins, than by one foul act of some greater sin. We detest that horrid Paradox, That all sins are equal; That he is as great a Transgressor that kills a Cock-Chicken without a cause, as he that murders a Prince. But he
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that makes light of any sin, when he comes to make up his account with God, destroys himself; yet this is often our Condition: *A mote in our neighbours eye, shews greater than a beam in our own.*

The third Cover is that of Excuses. *Saul* pleads for a Sacrifice to the Lord, to excuse his own Disobedience. *Gebezi* pleads the necessity of the Sons of the Prophets for his Bribery, *Judas* alleageth the poor to palliate his Covetousness. When the King of heaven invites Men to his great Supper, one hath married a Wife, another purchased a Farm, the third must go to prove some Oxen; many frame Excuses to themselves with as much ease as the Spider weaves her Webs. Every Sin hath its Cloak, Malice and Revenge pretends zeal of Justice; Willful Murther, I mean in our Duellists, which cries to Heaven for Revenge, muffles it self up in the Cloak of Honour and Reputation. These Fig-tree Leaves may serve to cover our Sins well enough, whilst it is Vacation; but take heed of the Term-time when it comes: When Conscience begins to spit Fire and Brimstone in our Face, when the Devil pulls off the Hood wherewith he hath blinded us; then all these painted Excuses vanish away, we hear nothing but Hues and Cries, we see nothing but evident Destruction.

The fourth Cover is, Transferring of our sins upon others; as *Adam* upon the Woman, the Israelites upon their Fathers. *The Fathers have eaten sowre grapes, and the Childrens teeth are set on edge*; as if the multitude of Delinquents did lessen the Offence; nay rather,

ther, the more the Transgressors, the nearer are the Judgements of God. Others accuse the Times, and evil Company of their Faults. How should one stick say it remained unscorch'd in the midst of a flaming Bundle? 'Tis true, *As fire begets fire, so doth sin; evil manners corrupt good*, though the operation be not always present: Poyson must have a time of working: The more our familiarity grows with sin, the less the deformity thereof appears: After the Musick is ended, the Tune still remains in our Ears. He that makes Conscience of his Ways, must avoid evil Company as he would do Poyson, or an house infected with the Plague; and write, *Lord have mercy upon us on the one Door, as well as on the other.* Others make Satan their Cover, and cast their Sins upon his Score. The Devil may solicit us, but he cannot necessitate us: He could not thrust the Apple by force down *Eves* Throat, nor push Christ by violence down from the Pinnacle: He hath a sleight of perswading, not a power of compelling: He blows the Coals, but the Fire is our own: He bites, but it is those which thrust themselves into his Jaws: *Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you.* Lastly, Some make GOD himself the Cover for their Sins; of all Covers this is the worst: So *Adam*, *The Woman which THOU gavest me.* Such are they which make all things in the World, even Sin itself, to come to pass fatally, inevitably, by virtue of a necessitating Decree of GOD. Such are they which make their Redeemer their Pack-Horse (be it spoken with Reverence) to bear their pre-

sumptuous Sins: as if he had shed his precious Blood to purchase our Liberty, that we might turn Libertines: Deceive not your selves; to whom Christ is made Redemption; to them he is made Righteousness and Sanctification. This is the fourth Cover, the Transferring of our Sins upon Others.

The fifth Cover is Hypocrisie. This was *Absalom's* Cloak for his Rebellion: Such Covers were *Cain's* Sacrifice, *Esa's* Tears, *Jezebel's* Fast, the Pharisees Alms, the Harlots Vow, the Traytors Kiss. The World is full of such Juglers and Mountebanks in Religion, of all Sects, who cry, *Great is Diana*; and magnifie the Image that fell down from *Jupiter*; meaning nothing but their Profit: Who cry aloud, *Lord, Lord*; and mutter to themselves, *Da mihi salutare, da mihi sanctum; videri*: Give me grace to cheat and to delude the Eyes of the World: painted Sepulchres, very Glow-Worms, which have a counterfeit Light, without any Heat; Pictures with double Perspectives, that to the Light, presents an Angel, the other from the Light, a Devil: We have pulled down other Pictures to set these up in our Churches. Nothing is more odious unto God, than to make a stalking-Horse of Religion: Christ throws out seven woes against Hypocrites: Other Sinners may be converted, the Hypocrite hardly, because he hath converted Conversion it self into sin. *Such as devour Widows houses under a colour of long prayers, shall receive the greater damnation.*

The sixth and last Cover is Impudence, to defend

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our Sins, and glory in them, which is used by none but those who have already gotten one Foot within the Gates of Hell. *Perisse puro cui pudor perit*: Past Shame, past Grace. St. *Austin* bewails his Youth, led in the Streets of *Babylon*, where when he heard his Companions boasting of their lewdness, he was forced to feign those things he never did, lest he should appear so much more vile, by how much he was more innocent. That which was his Detestation, is now the onely Carb for a Gallant: Such a Gallant was *Cham*, that gloried in the Nakedness of his own Father, whilst his more modest Brethren covered it with their Faces backward: Such another Gallant was *Caligula*, who said, *He liked nothing better in his own Disposition than his Impudence*: A Voice fitter for a Hangman than an Emperour. It was the height of *Israel's* sin, That she had a Whores Forehead, and refused to be ashamed: Shamefastness is the praise of Nature, the Harbinger of Grace, the Ensign of Honesty, the Seat of Virtue, the Witness of Innocencie. But glorying in sin is the next Link to Damnation. They that use such vain Covers as these, shall one day wish for another cover, even the Mountains to fall upon them, and the Hills to cover them from the presence of the Lamb. So unprosperous is this course of concealing: That's the next part, *Shall not prosper*.

First, He shall not prosper in his sin; he shall not finde that Happiness and Content in it which he expects. *Amon* was sick of love until he enjoyed *Thamar*,

mar, that moment passed, his Love was dogged with Hatred and Repentance. What a deal of convenience and hearts ease did *Abab* promise to himself in *Naboth's Vineyard*; and the very first time he goes to take possession of it, he meets there with the Tidings of the utter ruine of Himself and Family. *Herod* violated all Laws of God and Man, burthened his Conscience, waded through a Sea of Blood, all to settle the Kingdom upon his Son; and he proves an Unthrift; offers half of it to a wanton Minion for a Dance. So Goodsill gotten, are like a Coal of Fire in a thatch'd House. Remember *Herod*. Before *Judas* had fingered that beggerly sum of thirty pieces of Silver, his Desires were upon the Rack; he forgot his Duty to God, his Fidelity to his Master, his care of his own soul. But when he once had it, he could not indure to look upon it, as being the cause of his bane; he casts it away as an infectious Rag; he disgorgeth it in the very Temple: his detestation of that poysonous Morfel, was greater than his reverence to that Holy Place. When *Pharaoh's* lean Kine had devoured the fat, they were still no better favoured themselves. Let us all but look back to our former Excesses, and unlawful Pleasures, and see if we may not sighing say with the Apostle, *What profit had we of those things whereof we are now ashamed?* So he shall not prosper in his sin.

Secondly, He shall not prosper in his Affairs; not in his temporal Undertakings; *Jer. 22. 36. Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days.*
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Israel could not prosper so long as the accursed thing remained hidden in *Achan's* Tent. The eleven Tribes prospered not against *Benjamin*, until they had humbled themselves by fasting. *Jonas* prospered not in a Ship until he had reconciled himself to God; then he found safety in the Belly of a Whale. Neither shall he thrive or prosper in spiritual Graces: No Man can serve both GOD and *Belial*: These hidden Sins do choak the Seed of the Word; they hinder the Efficacie of our Prayers, they make the blessed Sacrament to become poyson, and our Fasts and Humiliations, to be meer Mockeries. The Grace of God will not suffer Mates, to be chamber-fellows, and fellow-commoners with her in the same Heart. To ask for which of our sins things have succeeded unprosperously with us, were to seek a man in *Athens* at noon day, with a Candle and a Lanthorn. The Lord sanctifie our sufferings to us; until then, we cannot prosper in our Affairs.

Thirdly, He shall not prosper in his concealment. God will bring it to light, 2 *Sam.* 12.2. *Thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the Sun*:---For nothing is covered, which shall not be revealed, *Luk.* 12.2. Almost incredible are the ways which God useth for the Discovery of crying Sins; especially of Murther. Whilst the Earth is covered with Snow, the Ditches, and Dunghills, and Deformities thereof are hid; but by the melting of the Snow they are discovered: So the villainous Projects of Dissemb'ers are so covered over with a shew of Snow-

white Innocence and Candor, that they are able like
Zerah his Counterfeit Grapes, to deceive a piercing
 Eye. But when time shall bring Truth to light, their
 horrid ugliness will appear to the Eye of the World:
 we may this day observe the footsteps of God's justice,
 how he brings the same Troubles home to their Doors
 who have been underhand the Contrivers and Fomen-
 ters of them among their Neighbours. And now *Bel-
 lona* begins to shake her bloody Whip among them,
 as if God should say, Thou didst it secretly, but I will
 do this thing before all Europe, and before the Sun.
Just art thou, O Lord, and right are thy judgements. So
 he shall not prosper in his concealment.

Fourthly, He shall not prosper in obtaining pardon
 for his sin; and then all his other Advantages are too
 much to his cost: *What shall it profit a man to gain the
 whole world, and lose his own Soul.* A damned spirit in
 Hell may as soon hope for forgiveness at the Hands of
 God, as that person who hides and cherisheth his sins
 privately in his Heart: this is to make God Confede-
 rate with us in our wickedness and dissimulation: 'Tis
 in vain to skin over a sore, whilst dead flesh remains
 within, the Weapon must first be pull'd out, be-
 fore the Wound can be cured: The Medicines of sal-
 vation profit not a wounded Soul, until the fiery darts
 of Satan be drawn out by Repentance. So he shall
 not prosper in his Recovery.

Lastly, These Words, *He shall not prosper,* are
 a *quintessence*, and signifie as much as he shall suffer, he shall
 smart for it.

1. He shall suffer in his Conscience, those *Caca*
~~canera~~, those blinde blows which no man knows
 but he, which feels worse than all the Plagues of E-
 gypt, and Botches of *Job*. This made *Cain* a Runna-
 gate upon the face of the Earth.

2. The Judgements of God shall pursue him both
 in this Life, and the Life to come. *Harod* did not
 only not prosper in his aim, to entail the Crown to
 his Posterity, but the day came that paid for all, such
 a conglomeration of unmeasurable Torments, as they
 are described by *Josephus*, did hardly ever meet to-
 gether in one man; and which is worse, these
 were but the fore-runners of greater: *Judas* did
 not onely miss his contentment in the thirty pieces of
 Silver, but he got thirty Curles; you may finde them
Psalm 109. The Money perished, but the Curles
 stuck by him until they brought him to an halter.
 Envie not a Murderer that braves it upon the stage
 for the first or second Act of a Tragedy; nor an Ox,
 that is fasting for the slaughter, nor a Thief that is ri-
 ding in state to his Execution. Have patience and
 expect the Catastrophe, *Eccles 8*. Though a finner doth
 live an hundred times, and the Lord still prolong his
 days, yet I knowe I shall be well with him that fear the
 Lord, but I shall not be well with him that feare the
 Lord. And so he shall not prosper.

And so I leave him hanging under a Net, reaching
 up to himself with a jump the day of his death, to come
 to the true Cover in the next world.

*But he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have
mercie.*

Confession, with its Requisites, Contrition and Amendment of Life, which is here called *forsaking*, do make up a compleat Repentance. Which some Fathers style a second Table after shipwrack, others a Baptism of pains and tears: yea, some of them doubted not to say, That Confession did loose the bands of sin, and extinguish the Fire of Hell; that is, not by way of Merit, but by way of Impetration; not by paying, but by pacifying the wrath of God, and so averting his Judgements. No, those blessed Saints did never dream that the Covenant of Grace, whereunto we are admitted by Baptism, was evacuated by a Lapse into sin; or that any new & different Covenant was established by Repentance, grounded partly upon the Merits of Christ, and partly upon our selves. Let Confession and Repentance have their due, but let them not thrust Christ out of the Chair, from whose Grace they flow, from whose Acceptation they have their Efficacy. Thrice happy are they which use this Plank aright, to bring them through the raging Billows of this sinful world, to the Haven of eternal Bliss.

Confession is as ancient as our first Parents, whom God himself did call to the performance of this duty. It was practised among the *Israelites*, by Divine Precept, *Num. 5. 7*. By those Jews that repaired to the Ba-
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ptism of *John*, Matth. 3. By those Ephesian Converts, Acts 19. prescribed by St. *James*, Jam. 5. *Confess one to another, and pray one for another.* Endowed with such ample privileges, as in the first Epistle of St. *John*, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And here in my Text, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.* There is no better physick for a full stomach than a vomit; nor for a soul replete with sin, than Confession. Bodily fores do oftentimes compell a man to put off natural shamefastness, and to expose his less honourable parts to the view of the Chirurgion. Ought not every one to be as solicitous for his soul? We offend God three ways; by the imaginations of our hearts; by the words of our mouths; by the actions of our lives. If we intend to please God; we must take a clean contrary course; for evil thoughts of the heart, bring contrition of the heart; for corrupt speeches of the mouth, bring Confession of the mouth; for wicked actions of our life, bring fruits worthy amendment of life. By this means we bring glory to God, and shame to our selves; and prevent that great confusion of face, which otherwise must fall upon us at the day of Judgement, before God and Angels and Men. A contrite sinner stands not upon terms of reputation with God, or with his Church. Why should we be more afraid to confess, than we

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were to offend? to make those the Witnesses of our Tears, who have been the Witnesses of our Faults to take away the Scandal that we our selves have given? Let the World take notice of our Sin, so may likewise take notice of our Repentance. A great Sickness often ushers in Health, and a better Habitue of the Body; a broken Bone, when it is well knit, grows the stronger: So *the first shall be last and the last shall be first.* Indeed *Imocence* (if the Herb of Grace were to be found) is better than *Confession*: but *there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than ninety nine just Persons that need no repentance*, among the Holy Angels: *Da Pater sepe per eis gaudere de nobis, &c.* Grant, O Father, that they may always rejoyce over us, that Thou may always be glorified by them for us, that we and they together may praise thy Holy Name, O Thou that art the Creator of Men and Angels.

No man can doubt but the Romanists have grossly abused *Confession*, by tricking it up in the Robes of a Sacrament; by obtruding a particular and plenary enumeration of all sins, to Man, as absolutely necessary to Salvation by Divine Institution, by making it with their commutations, a Remedy rather for Confessors Purse, than the Confiteents Soul, by imposing ludibrious Penances: As *Chaucer* observed, knew how to impose an easy Penance, where he looked for a good Pittance, by making it a Pick-Lock, to know the secrets of States and Families, *Scire en secret a domus atque undetineri*, by absolving be

they enjoyn Ecclesiastical Satisfaction, by reducing
 to a customary Formality; as if it were but the
 concluding of an Old Score to begin a New. So on
 the other side it cannot be denied that our Protestant
 Confessions are for the most part too General; We
 confess we are Sinners, and that's all, which signifies
 nothing: And a little too presumptuous: They that
 dare not trust their own Judgement about their E-
 states, without the opinion of a Lawyer, nor about
 their Bodies, without the advice of a Physician, are
 wise enough for their Souls, without any other Direc-
 tion: And a little too careless, as if we were telling
 Story of a third Person that concern'd not us: We
 confess light Errors willingly, which neither intrench
 upon our Credit, nor threaten us with punishment;
 but greater Crimes, where the discovery brings with
 fear of ignominy and disgrace, or suffering for them,
 we conceal and cover with as much art as may be-
 come us. Even whilst we are confessing, we have too
 often a minde to return *with the dog to his vomit, and
 with the sow to her wallowing in the mire*; What
 is this but a plain mocking of GOD? Far from
 any Hopes of Mercy: For though Covering alone be
 insufficient Cause of Punishment, *He that covereth
 his sins shall not prosper*: yet Confession alone, with-
 out Forsaking, is not a sufficient Cause of Mercy; *But
 he that confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercie*. Not
 forbears them in natural, or onely by an outward ab-
 stinence, but forsaketh them as a man would cast a
 snake out of his Bosome, with detestation. An out-

ward abstinence is not the true change of a Christian : like a Dog that is muzzel'd ; or a Thief that is manacled, which still retain their former dispositions : *When the unclean spirit returns to his old habitation, and finds it swept and garnished, not throughly, but superficially cleansed by an outward Reformation, without an inward Renovation, he brings with him seven other spirits, and the latter end of that man is worse than the beginning.* He that abstains from an old sin not for Conscience towards God, but for fear of shame or punishment, is like that Wolf whereof the Father speaks, which came unto the Sheepfold, to kill and to devour, the Shepherd waking, the Dogs barking scared him away indeed, but altered not his wolvis nature : *Lupus venit fremens, Lupus redit tremens ; Lupus est & fremens & tremens.* So forsakes them, not forbears them.

Again, *Forsakes* them, not conceals them : Penetration of Bodies, is a Monster in Philosophy : an Heart inwardly replete with secret sins, hath no room for Grace : A good Lesson, or a good Motion to it, is like a Spark of Fire falling into a Vessel of Water, presently extinguished ; or like good Seed falling among Thorns, soon choak'd. What fellowship hath Light with Darkness, or CHRIST with Be-lial ?

In natural Transplantation, there must be some affinity between the Bodies, as Fire and Air, not Fire and Water ; for the too great contrariety : but in spiritual Conversion, no disparity can hinder the change :

change : The greatest sins do often produce the most signal conversions, as it was in *Saul*, changed in the height of his fury from a Persecutor to an Apostle, from a Wolf to a Shepherd, from a Pyrat to a Governour.

We cannot live as *Amphibians* in two such contrary Elements, as a resolved course of sin and of Godliness ; such half Converts, who have nothing but a few idle yawning desires, can expect nothing at the hands of God, but to be spewed out of his mouth for their luke-warmness ; the mouth of Hell is full of such vain Wishes and Wishers, which use no serious means to gain them liberty, but onely thrust their heads out of the Grate, to look about them. A man may break all the Commandments of God, and be guilty of none, if it be against his resolution, if he be heartily sorry for it : It is not so much Sin, as Impenitence, for which men are damn'd : And on the other side, he that breaks but one Commandment habitually, and resolvedly, is guilty of all. I fear this is many of our Conditions, we rather cover our sins, or forbear them, than forsake them ; we desire rather to make a Truce with God, than a Peace ; We do with our sins, as Servants do with their fires when they go to Bed, put them not out, but rake them up ; so when we come to reckon with Conscience, and to make up our Accompts with God, we do not desire to take an everlasting farewell of our sins, *ab hac momento in Æternum*, as *St. Austin* saith, but onely a Coverien, to hide them in an heap of Devotions, for the present,

whilst we are doing some superficial Duties to God, or whilst the blessed Sacrament doth strike a kind of Reverence into our hearts, with a purpose to re-assume them upon the first opportunity; as the Serpent doth her poyson, which she had left behinde her in her Den. Can any man think that such a fained show of forsaking our sins, can be acceptable to God? O no! it is too hollow-hearted. That conversion which findes mercy, must be serious and sincere: Gods forgiveness and our forsaking, go still hand in hand together: *Forgive us our trespasses*, there's the one; *And lead us not into temptation*, there's the other: *Turn thy face from my sins, O Lord*, there's the former; *And make me a clean heart*, there's the latter: *Lord have mercie upon us*, there's forgiveness; *And incline our hearts to keep thy Law*, there's forsaking: That brings me to the last Part, *Shall have mercy*.

One might ask, Which of all Gods Mercies? The Air we breathe, the Light we behold, the Ground we tread upon, the Meat we eat, whatsoever we are, or have, or hope for, it is his mercie: *By it we live, and move, and have our being: Thou hast crowned me with thy mercie*, saith *David*: it is a Metaphor taken from a Garland, which is composed of many and different Flowers. Gods mercie was the onely motive to our Redemption; his merciful Grace preventing us and assisting us, is the onely means to apply this Redemption; the consideration of this mercie is that which encourageth us to Repentance: As Christ prayed *Father forgive them*; the poor Thief grew bold,

bold, *Lord remember me.* Mercie is the end of our Repentance, that we may finde forgiveness: Mercie is our supporter in all our sorrows for sin, that we roar not out with *Cain*, *My sin is greater than that it can be forgiven*; nor betake our selves desperately, with *Judas*, to an halter. Mercie is our onely plea, when we do repent; we cannot say we have done such and such good offices for the time past, we are too unprofitable Servants, we dare not promise of our selves, to be more serviceable for the time to come, we are too desultory creatures: Lord forsake not us, least we forsake Thee. Mercy is the object of our hopes, the total sum of our desires; both Grace and Glory do depend upon Mercy. So mercie is the beginning, the middle, the end of our happiness.

But St. *John* will tell us what mercy this is; *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* This Mercy then is forgiveness of sin. That which is called Mercy here, is called Justice there: It is Mercie to make a gracious Promise, bus it is Justice to keep it. Without this Mercy of Forgiveness, all the other Mercies of God are no Mercies, but Judgements: In this Mercy true blessedness doth consist, *Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven*: what comfort can a person sure to be condemned have, without hope of a pardon? The best musick in the world, is, *Son, thy sins are forgiven thee*, when GOD shall stretch forth the Golden Scepter of Mercy, that is, to all thole who for his love do mortifie their earthly members, and forsake their own Lusts: For he

that

that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth
and forsaketh them, shall have mercie.

Now among all the means ordained by God for the
obtaining this saving mercy mentioned in my Text,
after Baptismal Grace, there is none more efficacious
than the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of
Christ, the very conduit-Pipe of Grace to all worthy
Communicants, the Manna of Life and immortality,
the precious Antidote against the sting and infection
of the infernal Serpent, that inestimable Love-token
which Christ at his departure left to his Church, to
keep in remembrance of him; the true pool of *Bethesda*,
wherein we may be cured of all our infirmities. Pre-
paration of our selves is necessary before the perfor-
mance of all holy Duties, but especially before the ho-
ly Sacrament. We ought to repair to the participati-
on of this with as great care and anxiety, as if we
were immediately to depart out of the world. It was
death for an uncircumcised person to eat of the Paschal
Lamb; we must circumscribe our eyes, our ears, our hands
and our hearts; and take heed how we come to this
Wedding Feast, without the Wedding Garment.

O Lord, Be merciful to all those who prepare their
whole hearts to seek Thee, though they be not purged ac-
cording to the Purification of the Sanctuary.

F I N I S *****
